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PENTECOSTALS AND CHARISMATICS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

JESUS-SHAPED SPIRIT-ENABLED PEACE & JUSTICE

PAX PNEUMA: The Journal

PCPJ MISSION STATEMENT

To encourage, enable, and sustain peacemaking and justice seeking as authentic and integral aspects of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity, witnessing to the conviction that Jesus Christ is relevant to all tensions, crises, and brokenness in the world. The PCPJ seeks to show that addressing injustice and making peace as Jesus and his followers did is theologically sound, biblically commanded, and realistically possible.

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EDITORIAL

The Matthew 5:21-26 Project: Pentecostals & Evangelicals for National Security Through International Cooperation

Jesus is a smart guy. He said that if you're giving your gift at the altar and remember that you have a problem with an adversary, drop your gift and run to talk with your enemy while there is still time. That was a command, in the imperative mood. About talking with North Korea Rick Warren said, "I am not a politician. I am a pastor. But I do know that in any conflict—whether in a marriage, in business or between nations—as long as the parties keep talking, there is hope. My plea to everyone involved in this diplomatic process is to please, keep talking."

We Pentecostals and Charismatics should encourage nations to talk to each other, especially to help prevent war with Iran. It has worked with North Ko-

rea – they're shutting down their nuclear program – and it can work again. Several of us Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians have helped write a statement that shows the biblical call to be involved in the messy, yet hopeful, process of international cooperation. Please read *Evangelicals for National Security through International Cooperation*, talk about it in your classes and churches, preach on it, send it to your friends (and enemies?), and endorse it by visiting www.pcpf.org, www.matthew5project.org, or sending your endorsement to:

info@matthew5project.org



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FEATURE ARTICLE

And Jesus Gave Him To His Mother: When the Fragile Encounter The God of Life

LUKE 7:11-17

Jesus valued and treated the fragile and unprotected social sectors, such as women, in a special way. The way in which he valued and treated them is even more poignant, if you take into account that in the cultural world of Palestine of the first century, women formed part of the world of the excluded and the less fortunate (Marshall 1992:887; Bock 1994:200). Within a society that considered them as insignificant, or less important than the men, Jesus saw and valued them as human beings created in the image of God and as beneficiaries of the Reign of God which he announced (Senior 1985:354). The third gospel gives testimony of the particular concern, or special interest, that he had for defenseless and destitute social classes such as women (Lk. 7:11-17, 36-50; 8:2-3, 40-56; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 21:1-4; 23:27-28, 49, 55; 24:1-12). In this document of the New Testament, it is insistently underscored that Jesus of Nazareth, when he began to

proclaim the good news of the Reign of God from the despised province of Galilee, was not insensitive or indifferent to the diverse human needs of the marginalized. The teacher of Galilee always had time to see, hear, attend to and help the marginalized that he dealt with and related to on a daily basis. One day in the village of Nain, he had compassion on a widow who was weeping over the death of her only son. In the narrative of this event, recorded only in the gospel of Luke, the concrete gestures of love that Jesus showed for this uncomfortable and hopeless women, due to the death of the only one (her son) who could guarantee her a life of dignity in the future, outlines the missionary route that the disciples of the Carpenter of Nazareth must travel in all missionary contexts. This is a route that is connected to the way in which they daily value, treat and relate to the vulnerable and unprotected social groups, such as uncomfortable and abandoned women.

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Darío López Rodríguez is a Pentecostal pastor and theologian who is known in Peru and Latin America for his labor of encouragement among student communities, for his pastoral work in a church on the outskirts of Lima, for his active participation in the matters of the Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú (CONEP) of which he is President, and in the struggle against corruption and in favor of human rights in the marginalized sectors of Peruvian society.

TESTIMONY AND STORIES

Palestinian Pentecostals in the West Bank — Following Jesus and Working for Peace

Greetings one last time from beautiful Hebron, West Bank, Israel/Palestine. The weather is beautiful, the children are playing, and the mountains and the city combine to produce a most glorious mosaic of the direct creation of God and the positive side of human creativity. My first update focused on the Pales-

tinian situation and the second on interactions with Israeli settlers. This last update will focus on Christians I have met throughout the region. I will also fill you in on some of the political events here in Hebron.

I traveled to Bethlehem last week to meet Bishara Awad, President

of Bethlehem Bible College. He is a Palestinian Christian who founded Hope School for Boys. Bishara then established the college when the need arose for the boys to continue their education beyond high school. Bethlehem Bible College is an Evangelical and Pentecostal institution that trains Christians in

John Harris, a member of the Los Angeles area PCPJ and reservist with Christian Peacemaker Teams, sent this report from his 2007 trip to the West Bank. Please join us in prayer for the Holy Spirit to continue to lead and empower Christians everywhere to follow Jesus as we should and to become more aware of the situation in Israel/Palestine.

(Continued on page 3)

Palestinian Pentecostals cont'd.

reaching people with the salvation of Jesus Christ. Classes include theology, missiology, and multimedia production. While its focus is evangelism, it also finds itself in the midst of what it has determined to be an ongoing foreign occupation. Bethlehem Bible College is in the Palestinian Territories, and is all Palestinian.



John Harris (middle) and Bishara Awad (right), president of Bethlehem Bible College

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President Awad points to a map, noting that his land has been under occupation for forty years.

SERMON

Loyalty and Perseverance:

The Bible is Just as it is and We Should Follow it Close

Since it is the peace and justice conference, I want to talk this morning about why we're together as a peace and justice fellowship. I want to discuss the very foundation of what brought us together and bound us as one as Pentecostals and Charismatics for peace and justice. I want to delve into the ideology and the writings of the early Pentecostal leaders and take a look at their views of Scripture and war. The title of my message this morning is *Loyalty and Perseverance: The Bible is just as it is and we Should Follow it Close!*

You might ask, "Why that title?" Why not "The early Pentecostal theology for peace"? I tell you why...when we look at the next slide [available at www.pcpf.org]. I want you to notice the date of this article from the *Church of God Evangel*. It was published on October 21, 1916 and today's date is October 21, 2007. I felt so led to use this article because it was published this very day 91 years ago. It's an article from our denominational journal, the *Church of God Evangel* in 1916 by A.J. Tomlinson, who was the first general overseer of the Church of God. Let me pause here for a moment...what was in the air in the United States during 1916? **War.** World War I to be exact. So war is in the air and we have Pentecostals not only in the Church of God but in most other denominations as well who begin to address the war because they're pacifists and stand for peace.

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Eric Gabourel is pastor of Providence Christian Center in San Francisco and is on the leadership team of PCPJ. He is pictured preaching this sermon at the PCPJ conference in his church, October 21, 2007.



Scott Sundberg is the director of communications for Mennonite Disaster Service, based in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.
www.mds.mennonite.net

INTERCHURCH VOICES

Reality Check for a Pacifist

“That just really doesn’t work in the real world.” That pretty much summed up how a sibling responded to my perspectives on pacifism. Sure, they were great ideas, and Jesus, in whom she fully believes, touted them. Yet really those ideas just don’t work when one looks at the world as it really is. And you know, logically and viscerally—deep, deep down in your

gut—she is right. There appear to be threats and terrors on every side. Realistically, if we are to survive, we have to fight back with force, lethal if necessary. It’s unavoidable. It may seem a bit Machiavellian—the end justifies the means—but that is just how the world is. And yet I have to ask, as Christians, is our reality the same as it is for everyone else? Is not our

perspective of reality somehow a bit different? Does not faith itself, and the gospel message, change reality? In the real world the blind never see, the deaf don’t get the chance to hear, the leper stays an outcast, the lame never walk or leap. Nor do men dead for three or four days rise from the dead.

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BOOK REVIEW

Popular Christianity in Branson: Nebulous and Negligent? A Review Essay of Aaron K. Ketchell’s

HOLY HILLS OF THE OZARKS: RELIGION AND TOURISM IN BRANSON, MISSOURI

I moved to Springfield, Missouri with my family in the summer of 2000. During the first few weeks after our arrival we heard the consistent refrain: “You have to go to Branson.” We moved from Canada and had never heard of Branson, but after our first trip we were hooked. Only forty minutes south of our new locale, Branson provided immediate and endless opportunities for entertainment, recreation and leisure. The scenic hills, amusement parks, and theatres provided a cultural orientation to life in the Ozarks. We became familiar with the city and quickly felt right at home. However, as time went on, I started to get a little edgy. Something wasn’t right. We continued our visits, but I started to feel restless with the rather nebulous religiosity of the community. The blending of tourism and spirituality began to prove uncomfortable. Don’t get me wrong! I enjoyed Branson’s hospitality but I also felt conflicted by the convergence of Christianity with unqualified entertainment, consumption and nationalism. Aaron Ketchell not only confirmed my uneasiness but helped to situate my perspective in Branson’s larger historical context. In this review essay, I echo Ketchell’s thesis with a synopsis and critique of Branson’s philosophy of religion and entertainment followed by brief implications for members of PCPF. I believe Ketchell’s analysis of Branson provides a microcosm of a larger nebulous and negligent Gospel Americana.

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Martin Mittelstadt is associate professor of New Testament, Pentecostal Theology, and Spiritual Formation at Evangel University.

NEWS

North Korea and South Korea Sign Joint Declaration; Nuclear Facilities are Shutting Down



Katy Attanasi Barker is a PhD student in the Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN). After earning her bachelor's degree from Evangel University in 2000, Katy worked as a writer for AG World Missions and Today's Pentecostal Evangel magazine and did three years of graduate study at Harvard University. Katy's research is in the area of Ethics and Society.

It has been called the Cold War's "final frontier," but it looks like peace may finally be a possibility. North Korea recently agreed to close its nuclear program, and in a summit just a few months ago, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and Chairman Kim Jong-il of North Korea signed an agreement that could end hostilities on their peninsula after decades of suspicion, and turn the cease-fire that halted the Korean War into a peace treaty. On October 4, leaders of North and South Korea jointly signed an eight-point declaration that called for a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. Not only did the leaders discuss strengthening economic ties, opening a cargo railway service, having regular summits, and creating a joint fishing zone, but they also talked about cooperating to exchange culture, history, language, and science and technology. One suggestion was for a "joint cheering squad" to travel to the Olympics in support of both North and South Koreans.

The relationship between North and South Korea has long been strained. In 1910, the Korean Peninsula was colonized by Japan. After World War II, it was divided in 1945 into a Soviet-backed North and U.S.-supported South. The 1950-1953 Korean War was halted by a cease-fire, which, following this agreement, would be replaced by a newly negotiated international peace treaty.

Tensions heightened in 1987 when North Korea bombed a

South Korean plane, killing 115 people. During the 1990s, South Korea initiated the "Sunshine Policy" aimed at reconciling with North Korea. Kim's nuclear ambition, though, has been a major source of dispute: last year North Korea tested a nuclear device.

In 2007, Kim agreed to close and seal the nuclear reactor in Yongbyon in return for aid and diplomatic concessions. North Korea has also agreed to close other sites and disclose details of its nuclear program. Set up in the 1960s, the Yongbyon facility is where North Korea produced its weapons-grade plutonium. It is believed to have been the source of the materials needed for last year's test device.

Progress is being made toward closing the site. Over two months, U.S. personnel will remove the 8,000 fuel rods that power the reactor, disabling the plant. While the work is reversible, it would take about a year to reopen.

Some question Kim's sincerity in giving up his nuclear ambition. His government is still cited for being repressive and violating human rights. Still, the recent developments seem to be steps in the right direction. Let us continue to pray for the governments and citizens of both Koreas, for a lasting peace and safety.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

PCPJ EVENTS:

**PCPJ Conference—Politics of the Spirit,
October 17-19, 2008 in Dallas, Texas!**

PCPJ Trip to Palestine/Israel June 2009

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information!

OTHER EVENTS:

**The Scandal of Evangelical Politics:
Toward a Biblical Agenda (March 28-30, 2008)**

How should you vote in 2008? What issues are most important to God? What does the Bible say about abortion, poverty, immigration, foreign policy? ESA's upcoming conference will be addressing these comprehensive issues and much more.

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PICTURES FROM PCPJ's 2007 CONFERENCE—San Francisco



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